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ABSTRACT

One of a series of children's books written from the point of view of an elementary grade child with a disability or other problem, the stories emphasize the similarities in childhood experience while providing information specific to the disability. In this book, fifth-grader Brian, who has epilepsy, finds that his misconceptions about a funeral home are cleared up on Halloween night. After the story, a question and answer section provides answers (by Brian) of typical questions children often have about epilepsy. These include: "What is epilepsy?" "What is a seizure?" "What is your kind of seizure like?" "How do you cure your seizures?" "Do you know when a seizure is coming?" "How long does a tonic clonic seizure last?" "What should I do if someone has a seizure?" "How did you get epilepsy?" "How did you find out you had epilepsy?" "Can you play sports?" "Can you drive a car?" "Isn't having epilepsy hard for you?" (DB)

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Trick Or Treat
Or Trouble

Meet

BRIAN

Birthday: March 1
(I came in "roaring like a lion.")

Best friends:

Robbie Jenkins	Nguyen Huy Nam
Leslie Rosenbaum	Melody James
Mark Riley	Michael Riley

Hobbies:

Playing the saxophone
Collecting baseball cards
Listening to scary stories
("Michael tells the best ones.")

Sports:

Baseball
Basketball
Karate

Favorite food (Yum!):

Spaghetti and meatballs
Green beans fresh from the garden
Halloween candy

Favorite Subjects:

Geography
Weather: It's really called meteorology.
("My Dad's a TV weatherman.")

Yuck!:

Raking leaves in the fall
Homework on the weekend
Eggs: any kind, any way
("I smell eggs before a seizure.")

Brian McDaniel

THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK BOOK SERIES

Trick Or Treat Or Trouble

Featuring Brian McDaniel

Barbara Aiello and Jeffrey Shulman
Illustrated by Loel Barr

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY BOOKS
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(The Kids on the Block book series)

Summary: Just as friends sometimes misunderstand about his epilepsy, Brian's misconceptions about a funeral home are cleared up on Halloween night. Concludes with a question-and-answer section in which Brian discusses the causes and treatment of epilepsy.

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[Fic]

To the children who teach us about differences—
and similarities

Dear Reader:

Who are The Kids on the Block? They are kids like you. They like to do the same things you do. They share your hopes and fears. And like you, they have differences. You'll meet kids who are blind or have cerebral palsy. You'll meet kids who are deaf or have asthma. And you'll meet kids whose lives have been changed by divorce or drugs.

In The Kids on the Block Book Series, you'll find their stories. You'll read stories about friendship and growing up, stories about changes and challenges. But you won't read about kids who are dependent, and you won't read about superheroes, either. The Kids on the Block are regular kids leading regular lives.

"I'm not an epileptic," one kid says. "I'm a person with epilepsy." And that is the point. These kids are people: different in the same ways that we are all different, alike in the same ways that we are all alike.

We hope you enjoy their stories.

Barbara Aiello
Jeffrey Shulman

CHAPTER 1

It was just two days before Halloween—and you know what that means. Ghosts, ghouls, and goblins. Witches, wizards, and werewolves. And, haunted houses.

Of course, I know there's no such thing as a haunted house. I'm Brian McDaniel, and I know all about being afraid—because sometimes people are afraid of me! No, I'm not a werewolf or a goblin. But I do have epilepsy. You don't know what that is? Well, it's kind of hard to explain, but one thing it means is that every once in a while, I have a seizure. I might fall down and start to shake all over. It's nothing to be afraid of, but most people have never seen anyone having a seizure before—and they just don't know what they should do. I think that's why they start to get scared. Honestly, from the looks of some people, you'd think they had seen a ghost.

Speaking of ghosts, it's time for my tale of the Fremont Mansion. Did you know that people say it's haunted by the ghost of old Mrs. Fremont? They say that each year, just around Halloween, you can hear the lonely voice of Mrs. Fremont calling out. Some people say that when the Halloween moon is full and bright, you can see a shadowy figure sitting in the living room of that lonely old house, rocking back and forth, and waiting . . . for . . . for what?

I call my adventure "Trick or Treat or Trouble." Let's see what happens.

And, remember: don't be afraid!

CHAPTER 2

It got to be a habit with me, just like brushing my teeth or taking my medicine. Every morning, I would meet my friends, and on our way to school, we'd walk by the old Fremont Mansion. I didn't really like to walk by it alone. It wasn't just me: nobody walked by the old Fremont Mansion alone. I mean, nobody. Oh, Robbie said he did once, but, you know, that was just Robbie talking.

The Fremont Mansion is the oldest house in Woodburn. The biggest, too. Nobody has lived in it since old Mrs. Fremont died. That was years and years ago. By now, thick weeds had grown all around the crumbling porch. With its broken windows, the Mansion seemed to frown at the world outside, like an angry jack-o'-lantern. The paint had long since faded. My Mom said the Fremont Mansion looked like someone with a fever—sick and pale. Pale as a ghost, I thought.

"It's haunted, all right," Robbie said every time we went by it. And we all agreed.

But, now, that was changing. The old Fremont Mansion was coming back to life. It looked like someone had bought the place: every morning workers were busy fixing it up. And every morning and afternoon, we'd walk by to see what they had done that day. One morning, the weeds were gone. Another morning, and the porch was fixed. Still another, and there was new glass in the windows and new shutters alongside them. Little by little, there was new life in the old Fremont Mansion.

"That old house is smiling," Leslie said, smiling herself.

"I wonder what they're going to do with it," I said.

"Maybe it's some kind of business," Melody suggested. "That house is too big for one family."

"What kind of business would move in there?" asked Robbie.

"Maybe a hotel," Melody said.

"You mean," Robbie asked in a ghoulish voice, "where the guests check in, but they don't check out?"

"Somebody ought to check you out, Robbie Jenkins," Melody said back.

"Or maybe a horse farm," said Nam hopefully. When Nam came to America (he was only three), he thought there would be cowboys and horses everywhere. He was still disappointed.

"Maybe," said Robbie, with an evil grin, "haunted horses." He crept up behind Nam and whispered, "Haunted horses with headless horsemen."

"Knock it off, Robbie," I said. He was always trying to scare Nam, and it usually worked. After all, Nam was only ten. But, sometimes, it worked with me, too.

"What's the matter, Brian?" Robbie asked. "Are you scared?"

"No, I'm not scared," I replied, trying to sound like I really meant it.

"Not scared of Mrs. Fremont," Robbie continued, "waiting in her creaky old rocking chair for someone to come to the door?" Robbie bent himself over and rubbed his hands together, like one of the old witches in our fairy tale books. He tried to sound scary, too, talking in a high, witchy voice—and he was doing a good job at it. "Waiting for someone. Maybe a trick or treater. Maybe you, Brian. Or you, Nam." And Robbie lunged at Nam, pretending he was going to grab him.

Nam jumped back in fright. He was really scared.

"That's not funny, Robbie," Melody said.

"If you're so brave, Robbie," Leslie went on, "why don't you walk right up to the front door and ask to talk to Mrs. Fremont herself? Why don't you?"

"You think I won't?" asked Robbie.

"Yes, I think you won't," Leslie replied.

"Do you dare me?" he asked. "Do you?"

Leslie just turned away and ignored him.

"Well, *I* do," I said. "I dare you."

"Oh, yeah?" Robbie said, not daring to back down.

Now, I couldn't back down either. "I dare you to knock on the front door of the Fremont Mansion." I don't know why I dared Robbie. I knew I shouldn't have done it, but I just got so angry with him trying to scare Nam that way. Still, that was no excuse.

But it was too late to take it back.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" Leslie asked.

"You want me to do it now?" he asked in return.

"Isn't now as good a time as any?" Melody asked. She and Leslie were really ganging up on Robbie. He was in a fix. I felt sorry for him, I have to admit. Robbie acted like a jerk sometimes, but he was still my friend. The first time I had a seizure at school, he stuck right by me. Melody told me about it later. While everybody else was running around like a bunch of wild chickens, Robbie stayed calm—and stayed by me. When the seizure was over, it was Robbie who was there, holding my hand.

"He can't do it now," I said all of a sudden. "We'll all be late for school."

"That's right," said Nam. I think even he felt a little bit sorry for Robbie.

"He *can* do right after school, can't he?" That was Leslie.

"Right after school," echoed Melody.

"Yeah, that's right," Robbie replied. But he didn't sound quite as brave as before.

CHAPTER 3

Who could think about school today? I was only halfway listening to Mr. Beame, our fifth-grade teacher, describe the difference between an adjective and an adverb. Would Robbie keep his dare? I asked myself. Would he really ask to see Mrs. Fremont? I wondered.

"An adjective," I halfway heard Mr. Beame say, "is used to describe a person, a place, or a thing." A person, I thought, like Robbie; a place, like the Fremont Mansion; or a thing, like . . . whatever it was that waited and waited—

"Are you still with us, Brian?" Mr. Beame was standing over my desk. I could almost feel his shadow, like the wing of a giant bat flying overhead. "Can you name an adjective?"

I didn't have to think too hard about that one. "Scary!" I shouted, a bit too loudly. Mr. Beame looked surprised.

"Good," he said. "And an adverb, Brian?"

"*Very* scary!" I said at once.

Mr. Beame looked *very* surprised. "Well, that's good, Brian," he said, giving me a puzzled look. "Very good, indeed. I'm glad to see your mind's on your work." If he only knew what was really on my mind!

At recess I caught up with Robbie on the playground. I still felt bad about the dare. "Look, Robbie," I said, "just because you made a dare, doesn't mean you have to keep it. Why don't we just forget the whole thing?"

"I'll keep it," he said hastily. He said it again, this time a little more quietly: "I'll keep it."

We saw our friends crowded around Michael. They were listening to another one of his stories. Michael Riley is Woodburn's greatest storyteller. He says he likes to "spin yarns," but all that means is that he likes to tell stories. He would tell all kinds of stories, but most of all he loved tall tales, like the ones about Paul Bunyan and Babe, his giant blue ox, or Big John Henry. "Whoppers" he calls them. Sometimes on days when it was raining or too cold to go outside, Dr. Mathewson, our principal, would let us listen to Michael spin one of his special yarns. You could tell he was spinning a special one now. The crowd around him was so quiet.

"It may look empty," Michael was saying, "but someone still lives in the old Fremont Mansion. Someone, or something. Did I say 'lives'? Does a ghost live? Well, there's one way to find out, isn't there? Tomorrow night is Halloween, and they say the ghost of old Mrs. Fremont walks in the pale moonlight of Halloween. They say there are bodies in the cold basement of the Fremont Mansion. On a clear evening, when the wind is low, they say you can hear their moans. 'Help me,' " Michael moaned in a horrible graveyard voice. " 'Help me.' Why don't you pay her a visit? I'm sure she'll keep a light on. And maybe she'll have a treat . . . for . . . you!"

I told you Michael was good. I turned to look at Robbie, and, boy, was I ever surprised by what I saw: he was as white as a you know what.

We started home after school in the shadowy light of the October afternoon. Usually, it takes just a few minutes to get to the Fremont Mansion. Usually, but not today. Step by slow step,

today it seemed to take forever. It was like an invisible hand was holding us back. Maybe it was trying to warn us . . . about what?

By the time we got to the Mansion, the afternoon sun was casting long shadows on the front of the house: shadows with skinny arms and long, thin fingers, shadows reaching out to grab anyone who would dare take even one step on the front porch of the Fremont Mansion.

"I wonder what they did with the old place today," I asked in a nervous little voice, trying to find something to say. I wished Robbie and I had never made this dare.

"Looks like they cut down more bushes," Nam noticed. "You can see the basement windows."

"And, look, they fixed up the driveway," Leslie said. She was right. The newly graveled driveway wrapped itself around the side of the Mansion, like a black cat curled up at the feet of the house, and curved out of sight to the rear. "Somebody must be getting ready to move in."

"Some *body*?" Melody asked. It was spooky.

Robbie hadn't said a word since we left school, but it was getting late. The October shadows were now reaching out for the upper windows. It was now or never.

"Well, Robbie, it's time," Melody began to say, when all of a sudden—it seemed from out of nowhere—a long, black station wagon appeared from behind the house.

"Look at that," Robbie said in barely a whisper. The black car slowly snaked its way down the curving driveway, coming closer and closer to us.

"I've never seen so big a car," Nam said. "It's pretty. Look at the silver wings."

"And curtains in the windows," Leslie added in a strange, knowing voice.

"That's no car," I said excitedly, as the big, black thing drove slowly by us. "Take a good look: that's a hearse."

"A what?" Nam asked.

"That's a hearse," I repeated. "It's for moving dead bodies."

"You mean . . . you mean . . ." Nam tried to ask, "there are dead bodies"—

But, before he could finish, we all started to shout: "They must . . . they must have . . . found the bodies! The dead bodies!"

Dead bodies? Dead bodies! We didn't need to hear another word. We just turned and ran like ghosts in the wind—and we never looked back.

CHAPTER 4

Have you ever been glad (I mean, really glad) to get home? Well, nobody was ever happier to get home than I was. I ran up the front steps and locked the door behind me.

Mom was in the kitchen getting dinner ready. I could hear her softly humming to herself. I could smell the sweet odor of spaghetti sauce slowly simmering on the stove. I could feel the light and warmth of the kitchen, and I knew I was safe. It was all so normal. No ghosts. No dead bodies. I breathed an immense sigh of relief.

"Practicing for the Olympics?" Mom asked, as I walked into the kitchen. I guess I was still out of breath. Mom took a closer look at me and sounded a little worried: "What *is* the matter with you, Brian? You look like you've just seen a"—

"Don't say it!" I stopped her. "Don't even think it."

"Brian McDaniel, what's going on?"

But what could I tell her? Should I tell her to make a little extra spaghetti, we might have a ghostly visitor tonight?

"Is it time for Dad yet?" I asked Mom, changing the subject.

"Almost," she said, turning on the little television we watch in the kitchen. My Dad's the weatherman for Channel 12. He likes it better when we call him a "meteorologist," though. Dad says that knowing about the weather is a science. You should see him poring over maps and charts and photographs from space. Mom says all she wants to know is, "Is it going to rain today?"

So it's usually Mom and me for dinner. I set the table while Mom gets the rest of dinner ready. That's just one of my jobs around the house.

"Mom," I asked, trying not to sound too concerned, "what do you think they're doing with the Fremont Mansion?"

"Well, I was wondering about that, too," she answered. "Oh, Jake, why must you wear that tie?" Mom was always talking to my Dad like that. It was like he was right in the room with us. I wouldn't be too surprised if one day Dad answered back, "I just happen to like that tie, Marianne."

"Do you think it's haunted?"

"Do I think what's haunted?" She was busy watching Dad. He was explaining how a big storm was heading in our direction. "That suit makes you look a little fat, honey." I told you: it's usually me, Mom—*and Dad*—for dinner.

"Mom, do you think the Fremont Mansion's haunted?"

"No, of course not," she replied, turning her attention to me. "You shouldn't listen to those kinds of stories. Did you take your medicine today?"

"Yes, I took my medicine. You know that I take my medicine every day." That's another one of my jobs, making sure I take my medication. I take a medicine called an "anticonvulsant" for my epilepsy. It helps control my seizures so I don't have so many. I even keep a record of my medication—just so I don't forget. "You're in charge of your medication": that's what Mom and Dad tell me. But that doesn't stop them from reminding me. I guess that's all right. I mean, after all, they are my parents.

"Mom?"

"Yes, Brian?"

"Do you believe in ghosts?" I asked.

"Brian, I think you've had too much Halloween already. No, I don't believe in ghosts or haunted mansions. Do you?"

"Well, I don't know. How come everyone is so afraid of the Fremont Mansion? The ghost of Mrs. Fremont"—

"There is no ghost of Mrs. Fremont," Mom said, stopping me. "People are afraid of what they don't understand. The more you know about something, the less afraid you'll be. The Fremont Mansion may look scary from the outside, but it's just another old house. It just needs a nice family to take care of it, that's all."

I knew Mom was right. People *are* afraid of things they don't understand. Having epilepsy was scary at first, and not only for me. It was scary for the whole family because we didn't know what was going on. I had to have a special test in the hospital, and that was scary, too. They put wires on my head to get a

picture of how my brain works. I felt like a robot! The doctors were really friendly, though. They told me how the brain sends out electrical signals, and they were going to listen to and look at the signals in my brain. They even let me keep the EEG: that's a picture of my brain signals. I still have to be tested every once in a while, but I'm not afraid anymore.

So I knew Mom was right. But that didn't seem to make a difference. I could just see a nice family of ghosts taking care of the Fremont Mansion, spending a nice evening in the basement with the other dead bodies or going out for a ride in their nice, black hearse.

Dad got home in time to tuck me in. "Looks like a big storm tomorrow, Brian," he warned, pulling the covers up to my chin. "Better take your umbrella with you when you trick or treat. There's nothing worse than wet ghouls and goblins," he added, chuckling at the thought.

"Right," I said, forcing a laugh. "Ghouls and goblins, ha, ha." That's just what I needed to hear before trying to fall asleep.

Dad said, "Good night, Brian," and turned off the light.

It was just me and the dark. I tried to convince myself that I wasn't afraid. I tried to think about happy things, like going to a baseball game with my Dad or hiking in the woods with my friends. But no matter what I thought about, dark clouds rolled across the sky, and a big, black car drove slowly toward me, and an empty rocking chair kept rocking back and forth . . . back and forth. I heard strange, faraway voices in the dark.

It was just me and the dark. But not for long. I climbed out of bed and turned the light back on.

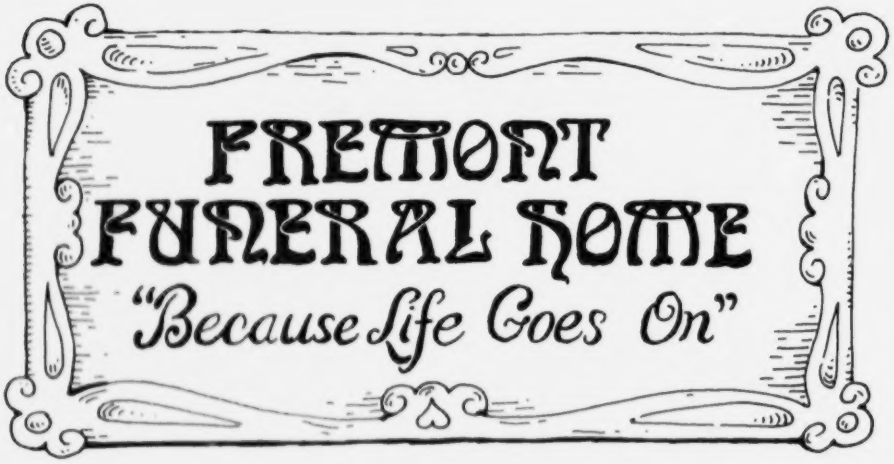
And I slept with that light on all night long.

CHAPTER 5

It was Halloween morning, and it was harder than ever to walk by the old Fremont Mansion. We tried to go by in single file without looking at the Mansion: Melody in front, then me, Nam right behind me holding onto my jacket, Leslie next, and Robbie bringing up the rear. We tried to look straight ahead. Step by slow step, we filed past the Fremont Mansion.

But it was no use. It was like the Mansion itself reached out a grisly hand to us and said, "Don't walk by without saying hello. Ha, ha, ha." One by one, we turned to look at the haunted house. Black clouds were rolling up from behind the Mansion.

There were workers busy in the front of the Mansion. They were putting up a big, heavy sign. The lettering was in a fancy script—and it was all in black:



"A funeral home!" Melody announced with surprise. "The old Fremont Mansion is going to be a funeral home."

"That's creepy," said Leslie.

"I'll bet it's a trick," Robbie said.

"A trick?" Nam asked.

"What are you talking about?" asked Melody.

"I'll bet the funeral home is just a disguise so no one will wonder about the dead bodies buried in the basement."

"Do you really think so?" asked Nam.

"He just might be right, you know," I agreed.

But Melody and Leslie disagreed. "It's a funeral home," they said together.

"No way," I said. I was convinced. "It's a haunted funeral home. Haunted by the ghosts of dead bodies in the basement."

"It sounds like Robbie and Brian are scared," Melody said to Leslie. "Doesn't it?"

Leslie replied, "It sounds like they're scared to death."

They both started laughing. Some joke, I thought. I guess Robbie thought the same thing. "We're not scared of the Fremont Mansion," he insisted.

"Yeah, we're not scared," I repeated. We're not? Then, why did I sleep with the light on last night?

"Aren't they brave?" Leslie said to Melody. I knew they were teasing us. I knew it and I didn't like it. "Aren't they the big, brave heroes?"

"They sure are," Melody replied. "Do you think they're brave enough to go trick or treating . . . *there*?" Melody asked. Her finger was pointing toward the front door of the Mansion.

I heard a voice inside my head say, "Of course, I'm not brave enough. Just ignore them." But, suddenly, I heard another voice say, "Of course, we are." It belonged to Robbie. We are? *We are?* Then why did I hear a strange, faraway voice calling out to me in my dreams?

Just then, I heard another faraway voice. But this one had a vaguely familiar sound. "Of course, we are," it said. I thought I might faint when I realized that voice was mine! What was I saying? And why? The last place I wanted to see on Halloween night was the Fremont Mansion. And trick or treating there? I'd just as soon have a picnic in a graveyard.

"And I'll do it, too," said Nam.

Melody and Leslie started to laugh again.

"You two don't think we'll do it," Robbie insisted to Melody and Leslie. "But we'll show you."

Melody and Leslie still weren't convinced. "We'll see" was all they said.

"You'll see, all right," I boasted.

"Yeah, you'll see," repeated Nam.

"We'll see who's big and brave," Robbie said. "And we'll also see who's *not*."

"Oh, yeah?" Melody snapped back. "*We'll show you!* We'll go with you."

"We will?" Leslie gulped.

"We're just as brave as they are," huffed Melody.

"We are?" Leslie gulped again.

We walked on past the Mansion. Melody and Leslie were out in front, nervously chattering away like chipmunks on the first day of spring. Robbie, Nam, and I came on behind, as quiet as a forest in the dead of winter.

Walking toward school, I thought I could feel the weight of a shadowy hand on my shoulder. I turned around once, only once, but there was nothing in sight. Nothing, except the dark, towering shadow of the Fremont Mansion.

CHAPTER 6

It was Halloween night. Dad was right. A thick storm was brewing outside. Black clouds hid the Halloween moon and stars from sight. From my bedroom window I could see lightning on the horizon.

Would we really do it? Why did I have to say I would? Once, Mr. Beame took us to see a play called *Macbeth*, and in it these three witches mix up a horrible brew of toads and snakes. There was a smoking cauldron right on the stage. Now, that boiling pot of lizard legs and bat guts was inside me, turning and churning and churning and turning.

How did I get into this?

I slipped on my costume. I was going to be Count Dracula, the vampire who walks in the night. I was tying on my black cape when a bolt of lightning, a flashing strip of white, lit the darkness outside my window. I saw the top turret of the Fremont Mansion in the sudden light. Was that . . . a light . . . in the upper window?

How did I get into this? How could I get out of it?

Halloween is one of my favorite nights: pumpkins glowing orange in all the windows, scary costumes, trick or treating.

And the part I like best? That's when you get home and look at all your treats. Dad says I remind him of a bank robber counting up all the loot. I should say, Halloween is *usually* one of my favorite nights. But this was not a usual Halloween night.

"Don't you look wonderful!" Mom exclaimed when I came downstairs in my vampire costume. "Oh," she corrected herself, "I mean, don't you look terrifying! Why, you'll scare the whole neighborhood."

I wasn't worried about that. I had a feeling the neighbors might be scaring me.

"At the first drop of rain . . ." I heard Mom say as I walked down to the corner to meet my friends. That first drop couldn't come soon enough as far as I was concerned.

Robbie and Nam were waiting at the corner. Standing in the yellow glow of a streetlight, they were a strange pair. Robbie was wearing a skeleton costume, and Nam was dressed like a cowboy. Melody and Leslie were late, but in a few minutes we saw an astronaut (it was Melody) and a dinosaur (Leslie) walking hand in hand toward us.

"I had trouble with my costume," Melody explained.

"I had trouble with mine, too," said Leslie.

I thought to myself, "Well, maybe they did and maybe they didn't. But we're all in this together now."

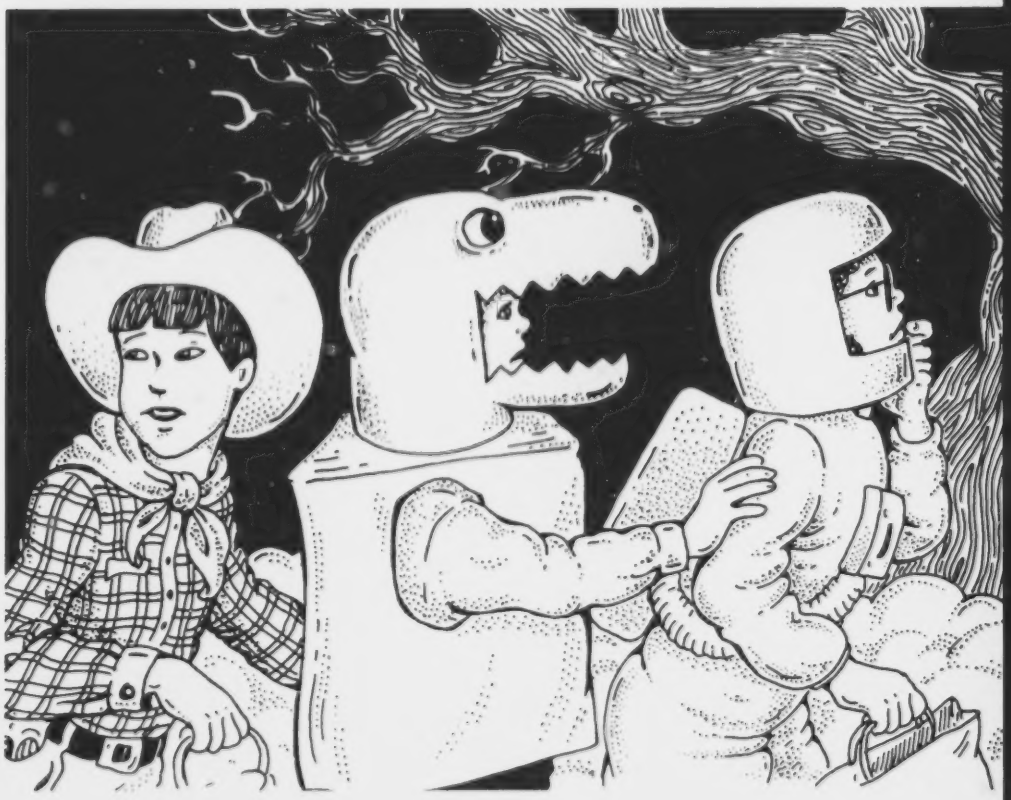
A skeleton, a cowboy, an astronaut, a dinosaur, and one very scared vampire: Halloween was weird—weird enough without haunted houses. Step by slow step, we made our way down the streets of Woodburn, first to one house and then to another. All along, though, we knew where we were really going. Wherever we went, the dark tower of the Fremont Mansion cast an even darker shadow upon us. Wherever we went, we felt the heavy weight of its long, ghostly hands reaching out for us. Wherever we went, we heard a lonely voice calling . . . calling . . . calling.

Step by slow step, closer and closer, until, finally, we were there. Still as statues, we stood in front of the gloomy old house.

"Look!" said Nam in a hushed whisper of fear and surprise. He was pointing to one of the upper windows.

There was a light on.

A low, rolling sound of thunder drummed in the distant sky. A bright tear of lightning ripped the sky. I held onto Robbie's hand while he held onto Melody's while she held onto Leslie's while she held onto Nam's. There we stood: one terrified line of hand-holders quaking in front of that terrifying old house.



"Who . . . who's going to go first?" asked Robbie.

There was no answer. Just the low moan of the wind.

"I'll . . . I'll do it," I said. I would do just about anything to get this over with. "Okay, guys, here we go."

Step by slow step, we walked up the sidewalk to the Mansion: a vampire in front, a skeleton holding onto my costume, an astronaut next in line, then a fearful dinosaur, and a cowboy trembling in the rear.

One step on the porch. It creaked and groaned like . . . like old bones being stepped on.

Yet another step on the porch. Its old bones groaned and creaked some more.

One more step, and I was at the front door. Like an angry guard, it stood before us, tall and heavy. There we stopped again: hands sweating, legs shaking, hearts pounding.

Then, I did it. I rang the bell. I can't remember when I ever did anything as hard as that.

"Well, that should do it," I said to my friends. "Are you ready, guys?" But they didn't answer. I was glad to know they were as frightened as I was. "Guys?" I said again. But, again, no answer. I turned around, thankful I wasn't in this thing alone—and they were gone!

Gone. Vanished. Without a trace.

"Oh, no," I said to myself. "She's got them." I wanted to run but couldn't, I was so scared. I kept telling my legs to get out of there, but they wouldn't listen to me. They just shook in place, my knees knocking so hard they started to hurt.

I heard footsteps in the Mansion. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't do that either. My mouth hung open, but nothing came out. I saw the doorknob start to turn from the inside. It was her! It was old Mrs. Fremont! I wanted to do anything but just stand there. But that's just what I did.

Creaking on its old hinges, the door started to open. I saw the figure of a woman in the pale yellow shadow of the porch light. I saw what looked like the shadows of crackling flames flickering on the walls behind her. I saw a rocking chair in the corner of a front room.

It was still rocking.

And I was frozen in place.

CHAPTER 7

The door opened a little more, and I felt a warm rush of air from inside.

There she was in front of me. The ghost of old Mrs. Fremont. I could feel the hair on the back of my neck standing straight up.

"Yes?" she asked

"I . . . I . . . I . . ." was all I could say.

"Oh, my, it's not Count Dracula, is it?"

I swallowed hard and tried to say something. Anything! But it was still "I . . . I . . . I . . ." and no more.

"I wasn't expecting any trick or treaters to come here."

"Are you . . ." I stammered, "are you . . . Mrs. Fremont?"

"Yes, that's right," she answered.

Just then, a bolt of ice-bright lightning flashed through the black sky. I thought my heart was going to burst right out of me. I closed my eyes and saw myself running, running, running, as quick as the lightning itself. I saw myself huddled under my blankets, safe and warm. But when I opened my eyes, that's not what I saw: I saw a pale yellow ghost. I saw an empty rocking chair that kept on rocking. I saw a basement full of dead bodies.

"Are you . . ." I stammered again, "are you . . . *old* Mrs. Fremont?" I heard a drop of rain tap on the roof of the porch.

"Old Mrs. Fremont?" she asked, and she seemed to smile a faint, ghostly smile. "Well, I don't know about that. I know the kids used to call my grandmother 'old' Mrs. Fremont, but"—

"Your grandmother?" I managed to ask.

"That's right," she said. "When I was about your age, I lived here with my whole family. Back then, this was the only house for miles around." Another drop of rain landed on the roof porch. "It's starting to rain," Mrs. Fremont said. "Won't you come in so we can get properly introduced?" She held the door open for me.

"Come in?" I asked.

"Yes, of course," she said. "I'll make something nice and warm to drink." Like a nice warm pot of lizard guts? I wondered.

"Come in?" I asked again.

"Now, don't just stand there getting wet. Come on in. After all, I'm not a ghost, you know."

CHAPTER 8

Come in? Was I really going in there?

I guess I was. Step by slow step, I followed Mrs. Fremont inside. I heard her words again and again: "I'm not a ghost, you know." She didn't talk like a ghost. She didn't walk like a ghost. I didn't *think* she did: I don't know how a ghost walks or talks.

Mrs. Fremont led me to the living room. It looked . . . well, it looked ordinary. Not a dead body in sight. But maybe Robbie was right. Maybe it *was* all just a disguise. I sat on the edge of a soft sofa, warm as toast from the heat of the glowing fireplace, and Mrs. Fremont sat in a white rocking chair. The room was flickering with shadows from the flames.

"Now, then, shall we get better acquainted?" she asked in a friendly, neighborly way. "I'm Susan Fremont," she said. "And who are you when you're not Count Dracula?" She sure didn't sound like a ghost.

I finally found my voice, or some of it at any rate. "I'm Brian McDaniel," I said in little more than a whisper. I was the one who sounded like a ghost.

"Why don't I make us some hot chocolate?" suggested Mrs. Fremont. "That'll keep you warm through a whole night of trick or treating."

I managed an "Okay" and was soon alone in the room. Weird forms and figures, cast from the glowing fireplace, danced on the walls. I felt more and more alone with each passing second. Now, I could make a getaway, I thought. I moved even closer to the edge of the sofa.

In a few minutes Mrs. Fremont was back with the hot chocolate. It smelled good, and tasted good, and felt good.

She didn't make hot chocolate like a ghost.

"What's the matter, Brian?" asked Mrs. Fremont. I guess she could tell I was nervous. "You look so . . . uncomfortable."

"Well, it's just that . . . it's hard to explain."

"Is it?" she asked. "Are you a little nervous because this is a funeral home? I wouldn't be the least bit surprised."

"Well," I explained, "Robbie says it's just a trick so people won't find out about the bodies in the basement."

"The bodies in the basement!" Mrs. Fremont exclaimed. She settled back in her rocking chair. "Now, who is this Robbie and what is this talk about bodies?"

I told her all about it. How everyone said the Mansion was haunted by the ghost of her grandmother. And how they said she waits and waits for trick or treaters on Halloween night. How you can hear the moans of the bodies in the basement. How the funeral home was just a disguise so no one would find out about the bodies.

"I see," said Mrs. Fremont, thoughtfully rocking back and forth. "Well, I guess you were pretty brave to come here all alone like this."

"I wasn't supposed to be all alone."

"I see. And just what did you think you'd find?"

"I don't know," I said. "I thought . . . well, I don't know what I thought."

"And what do you think now?"

"I think Robbie has too big an imagination," I said. I thought about what Mom said: how people are afraid of what they don't know. I thought about how even some of my friends were afraid when they found out I had epilepsy. I said, "I think I should have known better."

"Maybe," she replied. "But it gives me an idea. It gives me a very good idea," she said almost to herself. "Now, you better get out there before all the treats are gone!"

I thanked Mrs. Fremont for the hot chocolate. She walked me to the door. But no sooner did she open the door a crack than we saw a wave of flashing blue and red lights. It was a police car. No, it was three police cars! With their lights flashing in every direction, it was hard at first to see. It was a weird scene. I saw ghosts and skeletons and witches and goblins in the flashing red and blue light.

When my eyes adjusted to the lights, I realized that those strange figures were my friends in their Halloween costumes. There were Robbie and Nam, and then I saw Melody and Leslie, too, and Stephen and Michael, and other kids, too. What were they all doing here? What was going on?

I was just about to call out to them when, suddenly, I heard Robbie shout: "There she is—the ghost of old Mrs. Fremont. And she's got Brian!"

CHAPTER 9

"What's this all about?" Mrs. Fremont asked the police officer who came to the door.

"Sorry to bother you," he responded. "It looks like a case of Halloween fever. I'm afraid we've had a report of a boy being held in the Fremont Funeral Home by the . . . by the, uh, the ghost of old Mrs. Fremont."

" 'Afraid' seems to be the word for tonight," she said.

"You're not a ghost, are you?" the officer asked. I could see him smiling.

"Well, not yet, anyway," Mrs. Fremont replied, trying not to laugh. "But I think I know a cure for Halloween fever, if you'll let me talk to your collection of witches and whatnot."

"Be my ghost—I mean, my guest," the officer answered. It sounded like he had a case of Halloween fever, too.

Mrs. Fremont bent down to whisper in my ear. "Sounds like a good idea to me," I said.

I walked down to see my friends. "What happened to you guys?" I asked.

"Well, we . . . we . . ." Leslie stammered.

"It was like this," Melody started to explain, but she didn't have to.

"Oh, that's all right," I said. "I was scared, too. But there's nothing to be afraid of. Come on inside."

"You mean . . . in there?" Robbie shuddered.

"That's what I mean," I replied.

"In there?" Nam asked, too.

"Yes, in there. I want you to meet Mrs. Fremont."

"Mrs. Fremont!" they all exclaimed.

"Not *that* Mrs. Fremont," I said. "*This* Mrs. Fremont is made of real flesh and blood." Somehow, I managed to get everyone (all the skeletons and witches) into the Fremont Mansion. I led them into Mrs. Fremont's office, where we crowded around her desk.

"Don't be afraid," Mrs. Fremont said. "It's only natural for you to be curious about a funeral home, and nervous, too. But, remember, death is natural, too. It's a part of life, a part of the natural process of living."

"Dying is a part of living?" Robbie asked.

"Yes," explained Mrs. Fremont. "Dying *is* a part of living. It will be a part of all our lives: you can be certain of that."

"I remember when Mr. Yoder, our school principal, died," I said. "He was going to retire anyway, but he had a heart attack, right before his big party. It was really sad."

"It *is* sad when a friend dies," Mrs. Fremont agreed. "It's hard to imagine living without someone you care about."

"Some of the kids went to the funeral home to see him," Robbie remembered. "You know, lying there. Talk about creepy!"

"Not really." Mrs. Fremont said. "In many places, the custom is to prepare the body for 'a viewing.' A viewing gives friends and family a chance to say goodbye." Then, she added: "That's really what a funeral is. It's a way of saying goodbye."

"I just hope the body never says goodbye back," whispered Robbie loud enough for Mrs. Fremont to hear.

"That hasn't happened yet," Mrs. Fremont laughed. "But some people might not want to view the body. There's nothing wrong with that. Different people feel differently about death. And different religions and cultures have different customs. There are many ways to say goodbye."

Mrs. Fremont continued: "People get some pretty strange ideas about dying, especially around Halloween. But a funeral home isn't so mysterious. Why don't I show you what I mean?" she suggested.

"You mean, show us around . . . here?" Leslie asked.

"I mean, the grand tour," she responded. "Now, come along, everyone. Follow me."

A trail of ghosts and skeletons, witches and goblins, followed Mrs. Fremont into a room with small sofas and chairs. "This is called 'the sitting room,' " Mrs. Fremont said. "This is where the family of the dead person sits before the funeral starts. Here, they can spend a few minutes together, a quiet time to be with one another. And, here, they can welcome friends who have come to say goodbye, too."

Mrs. Fremont showed us a little area bordered by heavy, rose-colored curtains. "We put the coffin right there," she said in a quiet and serious voice.

"What's that?" Melody asked, pointing to a tall stand outside the sitting room. It had an open book on it.

"This is called a 'guest book,' " noted Mrs. Fremont. "When you go to a funeral, you sign your name here. Some people leave a brief message of comfort. Later, the family can read the names and remember all those people who were with them during such a difficult time."

"What's downtairs, Mrs. Fremont?" I asked, as we walked by a narrow flight of steps.

"Downstairs is where we prepare the body for the viewing," Mrs. Fremont said, very matter of factly. "Come on," she invited us, leading the way down the stairs.

"Prepare the body?" Leslie gasped.

"I think I've seen enough," said Nam.

I took hold of Nam's hand. "It will be okay," I assured him. "I'll go first." Step by slow step and hand in hand, we followed Mrs. Fremont to the basement. The basement! At any moment, we expected to hear a ghostly moan from the other world: "Help me! Help me!"

Mrs. Fremont opened a door at the bottom of the stairs, and, suddenly, we found ourselves in a metal-bright room.

"Is this where you . . . prepare . . . the body?" Leslie asked.

"That's right," Mrs. Fremont said. "This is what we call the 'embalming room.' "

"Oh," Leslie said. "What's embalming?"

Mrs. Fremont explained: "That's how we preserve the body. We have to put in a special fluid and drain out the blood"—

"Drain out the blood!" shouted Robbie. "This is where they make monsters!"

"No, it isn't," Mrs. Fremont replied firmly. "This is not some monster movie, and I am not a modern-day Dr. Frankenstein." She shook her head just a little bit, as if to say "Where do they get these ideas?" Then, she continued: "We treat a body with great care and respect. I believe that when a person dies, the spirit moves on to a new life. But it's hard to say goodbye to a spirit. Since the body is all that's left, we prepare it for a last

goodbye. That's why we preserve the body. That's why we take care to make the body look as nice as possible. I know I want to look good at my last goodbye."

"My Grandma always says she wants to be buried in her favorite blue suit," Melody said. "She says it's the nicest thing she owns. It scares me when she talks that way."

"It's really not odd when you think about it," Mrs. Fremont said, leading us up to the living room. "We plan for many other important events in our lives, like birthdays and marriages: we want them to be just right. We even plan for what will happen to all the things we own after we die. So why not plan for the way we want to say goodbye? That is an important event, too. And, if we wait until after we die, well, we won't have too much to say about it then, will we?"

Mrs. Fremont showed us into the living room. The fire was still burning brightly, its shadows still dancing on the wall.

"Do you have any other questions?" she asked.

I was still wondering about one thing. "What's upstairs?" I asked. I remembered that light shining in the upper window.

"I live upstairs," Mrs. Fremont said in a matter-of-fact way.

"You live upstairs!" I shouted. The words just tumbled out of my mouth. "You mean you live on top of the stiffs?"

I was so embarrassed I could barely look up. But when I did, Mrs. Fremont was still smiling. "Yes, I live right here," she said. "And I love this big, old house. Oh, I know all the stories, too. But that's just what they are: stories. Stories people make up about things they don't understand." She looked at each one of us. "I think you know what I mean."

I think we all knew what she meant. The Fremont Mansion was just a big, old house. There was no ghost waiting for Halloween trick or treaters. And no bodies calling out for help. But I think *I* knew what she meant most of all. "Just like the silly stories people make up about epilepsy," I said. "There's nothing scary about me either."

"But that's not what we thought the first time we saw you having a seizure," Leslie said.

"That's right," agreed Robbie. "We thought . . . well, I guess we didn't know what to think."

"We thought you were going to die," Leslie explained in her most quiet voice.

"But that was before," said Melody. "Before you told us about epilepsy. Before you taught us what a seizure is and how your medicine keeps your epilepsy under control."

"That was before you showed us what to do if you *do* have a seizure," Robbie said.

"That was before you knew the facts," Mrs. Fremont replied.

"And now that we *do* know the facts," Melody said, "we know that epilepsy really isn't anything to be afraid of."

"And now that you also know more about a funeral home," added Mrs. Fremont, "you know there really isn't anything to be afraid of here, is there?" We all nodded in agreement. "Good. I'm glad that's settled."

Suddenly, we heard a tremendous roar of thunder, and a terrific lightning bolt shot through the night. In an instant, the room went dark.

We all shrieked at once. We all trembled in the darkness.

Just as suddenly, the lights came back on. We breathed a deep sigh of relief. Then, one by one, we noticed . . . ("It can't be," I thought.) . . . that Mrs. Fremont . . . ("But it is.") . . . that Mrs. Fremont was gone!

"Look!" gasped Melody. She was pointing to Mrs. Fremont's rocking chair.

"Look!" echoed Robbie.

A cold hush of fear crept into the room. We stared at Mrs. Fremont's empty rocking chair. And we all saw the same thing. It couldn't be. But it was.

The chair was still rocking!

CHAPTER 10

We stared in disbelief. She was gone. Gone! Her empty chair was slowly rocking back and forth . . . back and forth . . . back and forth.

"I think I'm going to faint," I said.

Where was Mrs. Fremont? Was she there? Was she slowly rocking back and forth? Was that her shadow on the wall?

"I *am* going to faint," Leslie said.

"Say something," I urged Robbie. "See if she's there."

Robbie was frozen with fear. "Mrs. Fremont?" I managed to whisper at last.

"Yes?" she said.

I jumped right out of my chair!

"*My goodness, what is the matter?*" she asked. There was the real Mrs. Fremont standing in the doorway. She had a flashlight in her hand. "Just a blown fuse," she laughed. "You know these old houses."

"These old houses?" I muttered, trying to catch my breath.

"Yes, it's always something, you know." Mrs. Fremont gave us a look of surprise. "You weren't scared, were you?"

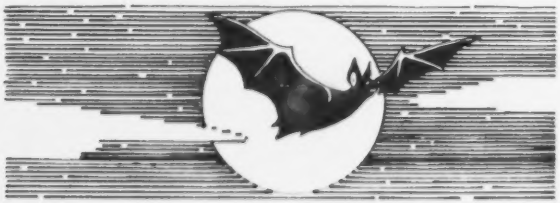
"Who us?" I gulped. Not much, I thought: our hair always stands on end. I didn't let on, though. "Ha, ha. Not a chance."

But Mrs. Fremont didn't look completely convinced, I must admit. "Well, it's getting late," she observed, "and I'm afraid you've missed your Halloween evening." She led us to the front porch. I remembered climbing up those creaky, old steps. It seemed like a long time ago. "I wish I had a treat for you," Mrs. Fremont said, as we trooped down the driveway.

"That's all right, Mrs. Fremont," I said. "I think we've had enough trick or treating for one night."

"Enough trick or treating," Robbie agreed. "And trouble."

We all laughed and raced to our homes. That night, I slept a deep, peaceful sleep. And I kept the light off.



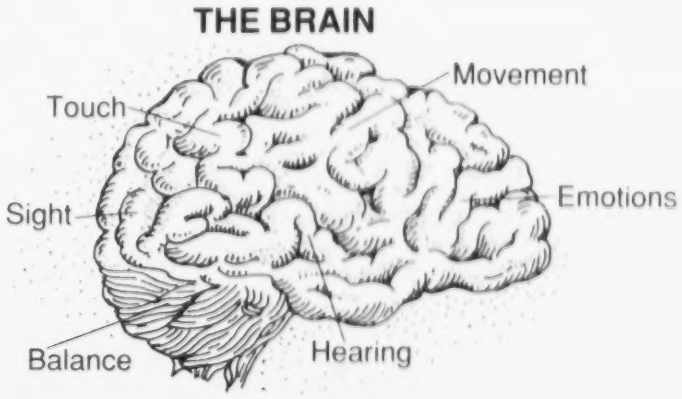
Questions for Brian

Had you ever heard of epilepsy before reading my story? Do you have questions about what epilepsy is like? Lots of kids do.

Q. What is epilepsy?

A. Epilepsy means that, sometimes, the electrical signals in my brain don't work quite right. The brain is our body's electrical message center, and, every day, it sends out millions of electrical messages to every part of the body. Those messages tell us when and how to do all the things we do: to read a book, to scratch an itch, to run a race, to solve a problem, to make a face.

Most of the time, my brain works fine. But, sometimes, it sends out more electricity than it should. When this happens, my body gets mixed-up messages. That's when I have a seizure. My Dad (he's a TV weatherman) says a seizure is like an electrical storm in the brain.



Q. What is a seizure?

A. When there is too much electricity in the brain, the body gets mixed-up messages. That changes the way a person usually acts and feels.

There are over 30 different kinds of seizures. But some are more common than others:

- A mixed-up message might make you stop and stare for a few moments. With this kind of seizure, a person has short "blank spells." It may happen so quickly that no one even notices it, including the person who has it. This kind of mixed-up message is called an "absence" seizure.
- A mixed-up message might make your arm or leg shake without your wanting it to. With this kind of seizure, only a part of the body gets a mixed-up message. This is called a "simple partial" seizure.
- A mixed-up message might make some people act like they are lost or dreaming. It may seem like they are drunk. They may have a faraway look and walk about in a strange way. This is called a "complex partial" seizure.
- A mixed-up message might make you fall down and shake all over. This is what happens to me. My seizures are called "tonic clonic." Lots of people with epilepsy have tonic clonic seizures.

Q. What is your kind of seizure like?

A. When I have a seizure, I lose "consciousness." That's a big way of saying my mind goes blank. So I never see myself having a seizure. When the seizure is over, I probably won't even know what happened. But my doctor showed me a movie about epilepsy with people having different kinds of seizures. One person in the movie had a tonic clonic seizure. I thought to myself: "Is that what *I* look like?" It was the first time I really saw what it was like to have a seizure.

With my kind of seizure, I fall down and get stiff. Then, my body starts to shake all over. My doctor calls this a "convulsion." When the seizure is over, I'm usually tired and confused, and I might have a bad headache.

Watching that movie taught me a lot about my seizures. But it also helped me understand why people might be afraid when they see a seizure for the first time. It was sort of scary for me, too. That's why I explain to them that a seizure is not dangerous, unless it lasts for a long time. I won't hurt myself or anyone else during a seizure.

Q. How do you cure your seizures?

A. There is no cure for epilepsy. But I take medicine twice a day to control my seizures. It's called an "anticonvulsant." With my medication, I don't have as many seizures. I haven't had one for over six months now. But that doesn't mean I won't ever have another one. I will have to keep taking my medicine, even if I haven't had a seizure for a long time.

Q. Do you know when a seizure is coming?

A. Sometimes, people with epilepsy get a warning signal just before a seizure is about to start. This is called an "aura." Just before a seizure, I smell eggs. Not that there are really any eggs around: I only think I smell eggs because my brain is sending out mixed-up messages. And I don't even like eggs!

Smelling something is just one kind of aura. Some people with epilepsy think they hear a strange sound or feel somehow different. But others don't get any warning at all.

Q. How long does a tonic clonic seizure last?

A. My kind of seizure lasts only a few minutes. An absence seizure lasts only a few seconds.

I usually take a short rest after a seizure, and then I feel fine. The extra electricity in my brain is gone, and I'm ready for action!

Q. What should I do if someone has a seizure?

A. First of all, and this is really important, stay calm. You can't stop a person from having a seizure or make the seizure go away. But there are some things you *should* do and other things you *shouldn't* do.

What you *should* do:

***Do** protect the person from injury.*

I once had a seizure in the school cafeteria. I found out later that Robbie moved the lunch chairs out of the way. He also made sure there were no sharp objects near me. That kept me from hurting myself during the seizure. And Melody used her jacket as a pillow so I wouldn't hit my head hard against the floor.

***Do** keep a person's airways open.*

Melody also told me I was making funny noises in my throat. So she gently turned me to one side. That kept me from choking on my saliva or anything else in my mouth or throat.

***Do** loosen tight clothing, especially around the neck.*

Robbie said it looked like I was having a hard time breathing. So he loosened my collar to make it easier for me.

***Do** stay with the person.*

Unless a seizure lasts a long time (more than 5 minutes), you don't have to call a doctor. Robbie and Melody just stayed by my side until the seizure ended.

***Do** let the person rest.*

I was very tired and a little confused when my seizure was over. Robbie and Melody helped me find a good place to lie down and rest. The school nurse made sure I was okay.

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What you should *not* do:

Don't *move the person.*

Unless the area is a dangerous one, like a busy street, let the person stay right where they are.

Don't *put anything in a person's mouth.*

You shouldn't give any food or drink to someone having a seizure. Don't try to force a person's mouth open. Some people think that you can swallow your tongue during a seizure and choke to death. So they might try to hold the tongue down. But you can't swallow your tongue: it's attached to the rest of your mouth. It's not going anywhere.

***Don't** try to hold a person down.*

It's not necessary to stop someone from shaking about. They won't hurt themselves during a seizure.

***Don't** try to stop a seizure.*

You can't stop people from having a seizure by throwing cold water on them, or by slapping or shaking them. It won't work, and it could hurt them.

There's one other thing you shouldn't do. Don't call a seizure a "fit." That makes it sound like a person is having a temper tantrum. But people with epilepsy can't make a seizure happen or stop one that's about to happen. It's not their fault.

Q. How did you get epilepsy?

A. No one knows for sure what causes epilepsy. The doctors think I might have been born with it. Some people might get epilepsy from an injury to the head or an infection in the brain. But my doctor says we still have a lot to learn about what causes epilepsy.

We *do* know that epilepsy is *not* contagious. That means you can't catch it. It's not like a cold or the measles. There are over 2 million people with epilepsy in the United States, but not one of them caught it from somebody else.

Q. How did you find out you had epilepsy?

A. Once, when I was in the second grade, I was sitting at my desk doing my math homework. The next thing I knew I was on the floor—and looking up at all my friends. Leslie was crying and calling my name, Robbie was holding my hand, and Stephen was running around and shouting, "Brian's dead! Brian's dead!" But I wasn't dead at all. My teacher told me I was going to be just fine. I said, "But why is everyone looking at me? And what am I doing on the floor?" I didn't even know I had just had my first seizure.

My Mom and Dad took me to the doctor's. Then, I went to a hospital for a special test called an "EEG." It's a test that listens to and looks at the electrical messages in my brain. It can tell whether there are any mixed-up messages. The test showed that I have epilepsy.

Q. What is an EEG like?

A. An EEG is a special way of listening to and looking at the electrical signals in my brain. It doesn't hurt at all. But it was a little scary the first time I had an EEG because so many strange things were happening to me. I think Mom and Dad were even more nervous than I was.

But the doctors explained exactly the way the test works. A set of wires called "electrodes" are placed on my head. Then, my brain signals travel through these wires to a machine that reads the electrical messages. The machine also draws a picture of the way my brain works. That way, the doctors can tell if there are any mixed-up messages. And I get a picture of my brain at work!

Q. Can you play sports?

A. I sure can. I can play all kinds of sports. Most people with epilepsy can do just about anything. When I play sports, I tell my coaches the facts about epilepsy and what to do if I have a seizure—the same way I explain it to my friends and teachers. And I always play safely—just as you should do. I wear a helmet when I ride my bike, I never swim or hike alone: things like that make sense for everybody.

When I'm old enough to get a job, I'll make sure the people I work with know all about epilepsy. Because I have seizures, I probably won't be able to do some things, like be an airline pilot, for example. I understand that. But I think the important thing is to give people with epilepsy a chance to find out what *they* want to do and a chance to be what *they* want to be. Everyone deserves the same chance.

Some people with epilepsy have a lot of seizures, and that makes it harder for them to do things. So they may need more special help than others. People with epilepsy are different from one another in the same way that people without epilepsy are all different. But that just means that people with epilepsy are like everyone else.

Q. Can you drive a car?

A. Not yet: I'm only 12 years old!

When I *am* old enough to drive, it will depend on what state I live in. In some states, people with epilepsy can drive if they haven't had a seizure in a year. In other states, they have to be "seizure free" for only six months.

Q. Isn't having epilepsy hard for you?

A. Yes, it is, but not for the reason you think. If I take my medicine every day, my epilepsy will be under control. My doctor says I may even outgrow it. But the seizures are not the hard part of having epilepsy.

The hard part is other people: when people think I'm stupid or weird. Or when they think I just make my seizures happen. Some people who don't understand epilepsy are afraid of it. I think that's why there are so many wrong ideas about epilepsy.

People with epilepsy are just as smart as other people. They are not crazy or bad—or anything like that. And most of them can do the same things everyone else can do.

Epilepsy is just one part of my life—and it's not a big part, either. I'm not an "epileptic": I'm a person with epilepsy. Sure, epilepsy makes me different: we're all different in many ways. But, in the most important ways, we're all the same, too. The ways I am different and the ways I am the same make me the Brian McDaniel I am. The big part is me: who I am and what I want to be. And what I want to be is the best Brian McDaniel in the world! That's the biggest part of me!

About The Kids on the Block

Founded in 1977 by Barbara Aiello, The Kids on the Block puppet program was formed to introduce young audiences to the topic of children with disabilities. Since then the goals and programs of The Kids on the Block have evolved and broadened to encompass a wide spectrum of individual differences and social concerns.

Barbara Aiello is nationally recognized for her work in special education. The former editor of *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Ms. Aiello has won numerous awards for her work with The Kids on the Block, including the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped Distinguished Service Award, the Easter Seal Communications Award for Outstanding Public Service, and the Epilepsy Foundation of America's Outstanding Achievement Award. Her puppets have appeared in all 50 states and throughout the world. In addition, over 1,000 groups in the United States and abroad make The Kids on the Block puppets an effective part of their community programs.

For More Information

The Kids on the Block
9385-C Gerwig Lane
Columbia, Maryland 21046
800-368-KIDS

Epilepsy Foundation of America
Information and Referral
4351 Garden City Drive
Landover, MD 20785
301-459-3700
1-800-EFA-1000
Publications, referrals to local agencies and organizations

Association for the Care of Children's Health
3615 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20016
202-244-1801
Quarterly newsletter for people caring for children with special health needs, Parent Resource Guide, publications

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013
703-893-6061
1-800-999-5599

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